

HEARD FROM
TED TODAY...

HE FINALLY DID
IT...

TOOK ANOTHER SHOT
AT LIFE AND MADE IT
INTO HEAVEN THIS TIME
WITH SHANNA.

LOTS OF
BABIES, JUST
LIKE SHE
WANTED

WE COULDN'T
TALK LONG,
THOUGH.

NOT THAT I DIDN'T
WANT TO, BUT ITS IN
THE RULES -- NO OUTSIDE
CONTACT,

THEY WON'T
FIND OUT JUST
THIS ONCE.

I HOPE NOT, AT
LEAST...

I'D RATHER
NOT MAKE
THEM ANGRY.

IT WAS A LONG
TIME AGO...

I LOOKED UP
AND REALIZED I
WAS ALL ALONE.



THE FEW
PEOPLE I'D
MADE FRIENDS
WITH WERE
GONE.

THEY MUST'VE
GONE BACK
TO TRY AGAIN
TOO, I
GUESS.



...BUT I WAS
STILL HERE

I THOUGHT I'D MADE SOME GOOD PROGRESS... I KNEW WHY I WAS IN HELL, I
KNEW WHAT I'D DONE WRONG, BUT I GUESS THAT WASN'T ENOUGH. THERE WAS SUPPOSED TO
BE SOMETHING MORE TO GETTING OUT, BUT NO ONE SEEMED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT.
WOULD'VE BEEN NICE TO HAVE A HINT.



KNOCK
JOHN?
ARE YOU
HOME?

THAT'S WHEN
THEY CAME...

KNOCK



THEY SAID THAT THEY HAD HEARD ABOUT ME AND WANTED TO HELP. SAID THEY SPECIALIZED IN CASES LIKE MINE -- SOULS STUCK SOMEWHERE BETWEEN REDEMPTION AND DAMNATION.



THE
HUBBARD

THEY WANTED TO OFFER ME COUNSELING. THEY WOULD SHOW ME SALVATION WAS ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE LIKE ME.



BUT THEY NEEDED SOMETHING IN RETURN...



A BAG OF
ROCKS.



NO BIG DEAL, THEY SAID. AN INITIATION OF SORTS. STARTING DOWN THE ROAD TO REDEMPTION WAS A BIG BURDEN AND I NEEDED TO PROVE I WAS READY TO BEAR IT.



I TOLD THEM
I WOULDN'T
LET THEM DOWN.



THEY SAID THAT THEY WOULD SEE ME IN A FEW DAYS.





BUT
THEN...

I STARTED TO
WONDER WHY...



IF SALVATION WAS SUCH A SUREFIRE THING THROUGH
THEM...



WHY HADN'T I SEEN
PEOPLE CARRYING STONES
BEFORE?



AND WHY HADN'T ANYONE
EVER TOLD ME ABOUT
THEM?



THIS...

IS THE
WORST
OPERA
I HAVE
EVER
SEEN.

I WONDERED IF
REDEMPTION WAS SUPPOSED
TO BE DIFFICULT FOR
A REASON...

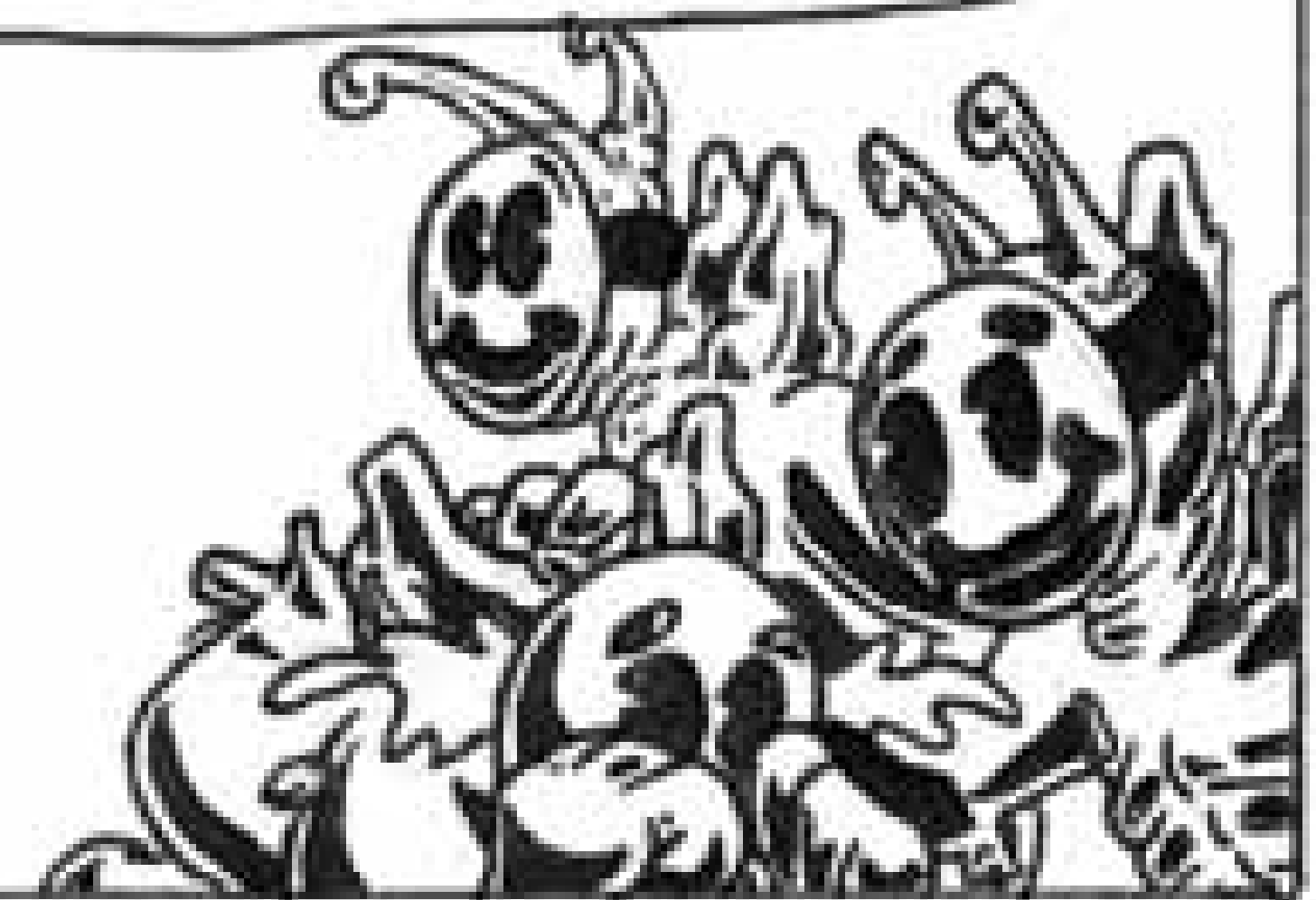
AND SOMETHING "COUNSELING"
SHOULDN'T
INTERFERE WITH.



THEY CAME BACK, THOUGH.
JUST LIKE THEY SAID
THEY WOULD.



I TOLD THEM IT WAS STUPID AND THAT I'D CARRIED
MY "BURDEN" AS FAR AS I INTENDED TO. I TOLD THEM
TO GO.

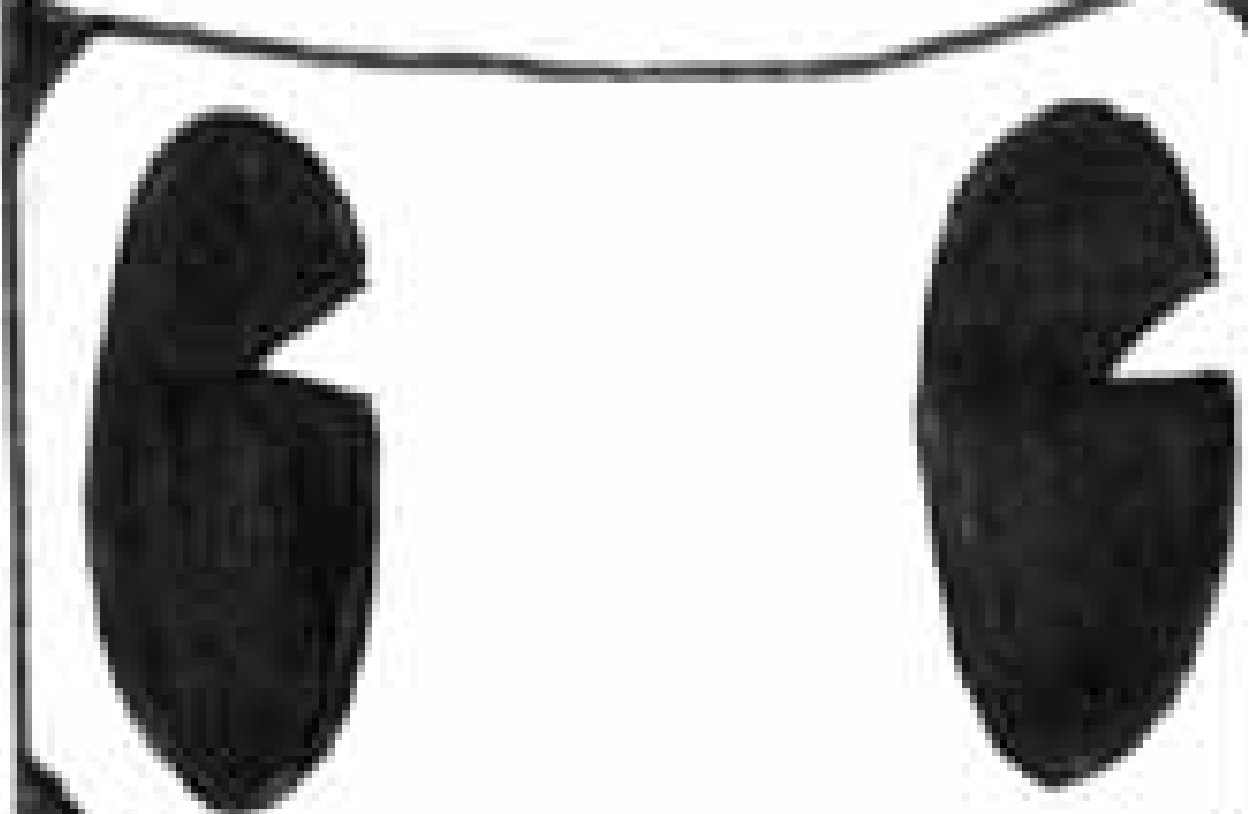


THEY TOLD ME IT WOULD TAKE TIME AND THAT I COULDN'T
BE SO EAGER TO GIVE UP. THEY ASKED ME TO TRY IT AGAIN
AND SINCE I'D BACKSLID, IT WOULD BE JUST A LITTLE
HEAVIER THIS TIME.

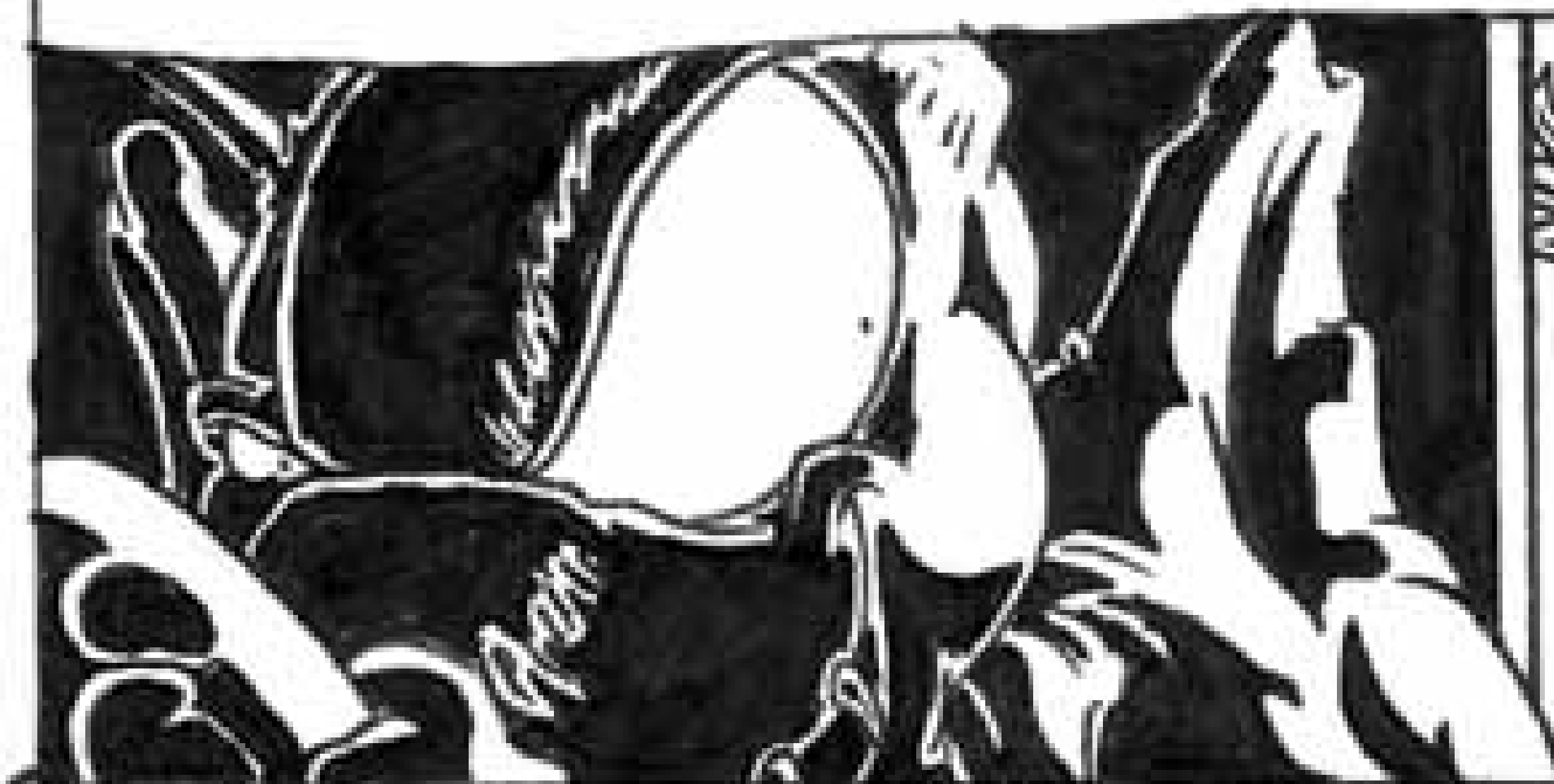


I HAD MY DOUBTS
ABOUT IT...

BUT IN THE END THEY
WERE VERY CONVINCING.



JUST A LITTLE FURTHER TO GO, AND I'D FIND HAPPINESS. THEY TOLD ME SALVATION WAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER IF I'D ONLY DO THIS MUCH FOR THEM.



I'D BEEN IN
HELL FAR
TOO LONG...

...AND I
WANTED VERY
MUCH TO BE
HAPPY.

BEING ALONE WAS
THE WORST PART



BUT EVERY TIME I THOUGHT
I WAS REALLY MAKING
SOME PROGRESS...



...I'D THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE
NOT TO BE SURE OF WHILE I
CARRIED MY BURDEN.



THEY SAID I WAS A DIFFICULT CASE, BUT THEY WOULD HELP ME THROUGH IT.
...AND THE BURDEN GOT HEAVIER...







I KNOW MISERY
LOVES COMPANY, BUT
REALLY...HOW PETTY
DO YOU HAVE TO BE
TO BE UPSET AT
SOMEBODY FOR
BETTERING
THEMSELVES?

AFTER THAT, THEY TOLD ME I WASN'T ALLOWED TO SPEAK
TO OUTSIDERS ANYMORE OR MY CONDITION WOULD WORSEN.
I NEEDED TO STOP BECOMING DISTRACTED...



...AND FOCUS ONLY ON
THEM AND MY PROGRESS.



I HAD NO FRIENDS DOWN
HERE ANYMORE. NO REAL
FRIENDS...



I TOLD THEM I HAD NO
OBJECTIONS.

FINALLY, THEY SAID I WAS READY.

THEY SAID I HAD PROVEN MYSELF AND
I COULD FINALLY JOIN THE OTHERS AND
BE HAPPY.

AND
I AM.



